

Hello, my name is Jake Fenner.

I am writing this to show my support for Proposed Bill No. 5145. Allowing for the use of safe pyrotechnics, such as smoke bombs, for photographic and videographic special effects would enrich the atmosphere of artistic and sporting events throughout the state. Allowing for the sale and use of these devices would bring a new element of expression and intrigue to content and events, therefore attracting more interest and potential business.

As a longtime fan of sports of all kinds, atmosphere is one of the biggest reasons why the outcome of a game can go one way or the other. As Nutmeggers, we know that from the success of our men's and women's basketball teams at the University of Connecticut - who enjoy a very comfortable home crowd at both Gampel Pavilion and the XL Center.

I am a fan and supporter of Hartford Athletic, a young soccer team playing at Dillon Stadium in the southern part of our capital city. We are already known for having one of the best atmospheres in the USL Championship - the second division on the American soccer pyramid.

While we do enjoy the comfort of a great supporters section - and a packed Dillon Stadium - we are always looking for ways to make our atmosphere and fan engagement better. One way of doing that is through visual displays. There are many ways visual displays can capture the attention of fans and support a team, but one of the more compelling is through smoke displays.

If you doubt the usefulness of smoke, I encourage anyone reading this to look up "soccer fans smoke displays" on YouTube. You will be met with amazing images of people using different elements - such as smoke - to intimidate opponents and inspire their own fans. Fans across the country and across the world have used smoke in a safe and effective manner to show support for their teams.

I have seen first-hand in states like New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania and believe that Connecticut can follow suit with our Northeast neighbors. I believe that in a safe manner, teams in Connecticut - like Hartford Athletic - could greatly benefit from the use of smoke. It would help bring support to the club, which in turn will help them with their outreach in various forms - including through charity. The passage of this bill would provide a great opportunity not only for this club, and supporters like myself in particular, but also for creative minds across the state through its application in other forms of media.

I strongly urge the house to pass this bill and help us add to the forms of expression that we may have as residents of this state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.